Imperial County Economic Forecast

Imperial County's economic base is dominated by the government, agriculture, and retail trade industries. Government is the largest industry in the county, accounting for nearly 33 percent of the total employment. The majority of employment is concentrated in the local government component.

Agriculture is Imperial County's second largest industry with 20 percent of all wage and salary employment. As one of California's leading agricultural counties, Imperial's fertile land produces a variety of agricultural products, including cattle, alfalfa, lettuce, and carrots. About one-fifth of the county's nearly three million acres is irrigated for agriculture purposes,

Agriculture laid the groundwork for success in Imperial County, but today the county's labor force and industries are becoming increasingly diversified. Economic development efforts have expanded opportunities for manufacturing and technology services in the county. Despite fluctuations in labor force numbers, recent economic conditions have supported job growth, a trend that is expected to continue.

The annual average unemployment rate in Imperial County exceeds the rate for California by over 12 percentage points; however, agriculturally oriented counties like Imperial tend to have higher unemployment rates due to greater seasonal variations in employment. The county's recorded unemployment rate in 2002 was 19.2 percent.

Housing is very affordable in the county. The annual average median home selling price was $85,675 in 2002.

Wage and Salary Job Creation
1985 - 2020
thousands of jobs

Real Per Capita Personal Income
Imperial County and California
1980 - 2020
2002 dollars per person

Forecast Highlights

- The county is forecast to create 5,000 new wage and salary jobs between 2003 and 2008. The forecast rate of job growth averages 1.9 percent per year.

- Real per capita income rises marginally over the next 5 years, averaging 0.7 percent per year. Total inflation-adjusted personal income increases 2.2 percent per year but population growth dilutes the average real income per person.

- Approximately 750 new homes are permitted each year over the next 5 years. That rate of building is not enough to keep housing densities or housing prices from rising further throughout the county.

- The unemployment rate falls to below 19 percent in 2003, and remains in the range of 18 to 19 percent through 2008. The number of farm sector jobs declines as the county becomes more diversified in the non-farm industries.

- Population growth averages 1.9 percent per year between 2003 and 2008. The natural increase is the principal engine of population growth. But net migration also contributes significantly to new population growth. The number of net-migrants is forecast to average 825 per year.
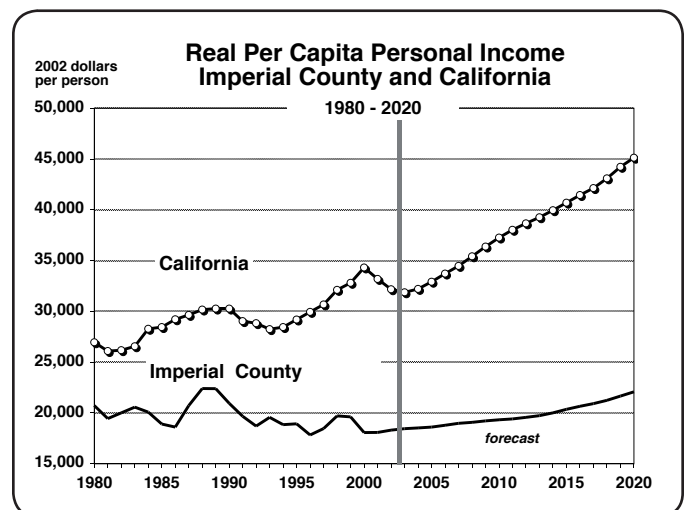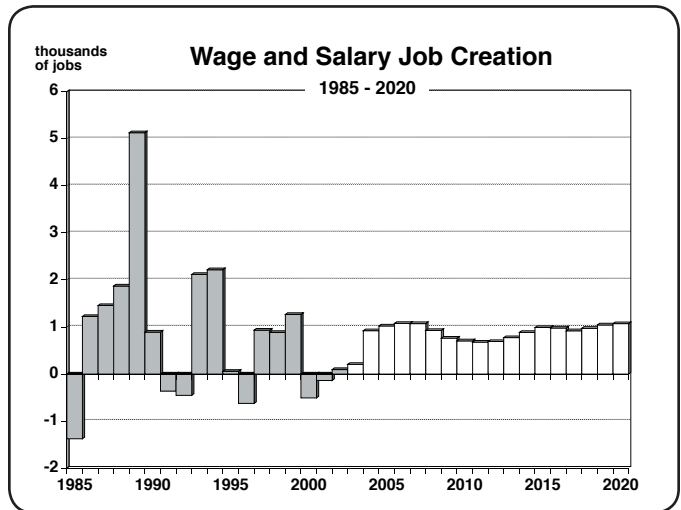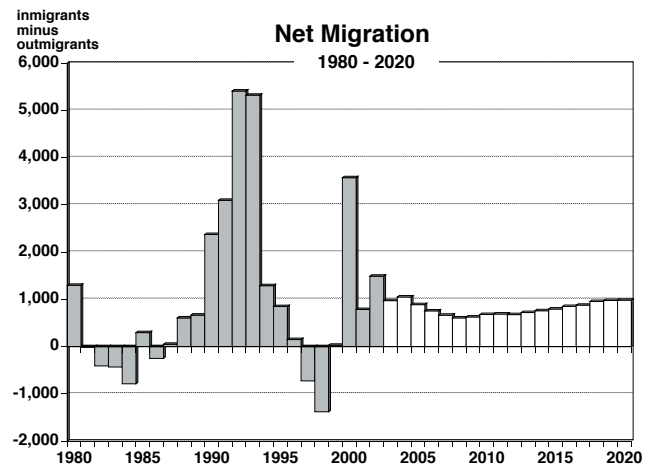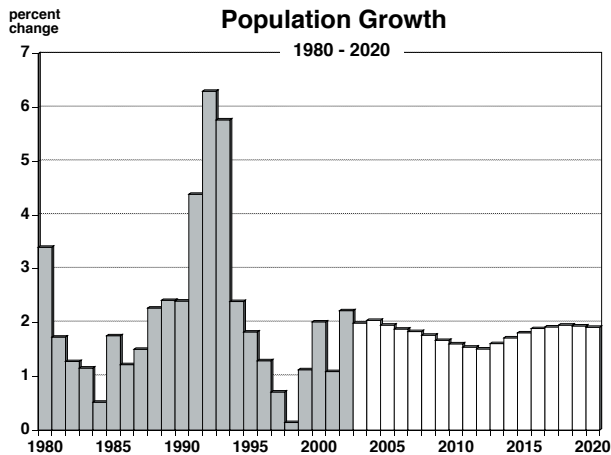
Imperial County Economic Forecast
## 1995-2002 History, 2003-2020 Forecast

	July Population (people)	Net Migration (people)	Registered Vehicles (thousands)	Households (thousands)	New Homes Permitted (homes)	Retail Sales (billions)	Personal Income (billions)	Real Per Capita Income (dollars)	Farm Crop Value (millions)	Industrial Production (billions)
1995	139,500	851	115	37	497	$0.7	$2.2	$18,937	$1,009	$0.8
1996	141,300	153	118	38	331	$0.7	$2.2	$17,836	$945	$0.9
1997	142,300	-723	107	38	327	$0.7	$2.3	$18,474	$1,040	$0.9
1998	142,500	-1,376	109	39	394	$0.8	$2.5	$19,716	$1,083	$0.9
1999	144,100	32	112	39	333	$0.9	$2.6	$19,622	$1,045	$1.1
2000	147,000	3,578	115	39	677	$0.9	$2.5	$18,082	$920	$1.3
2001	148,600	787	117	40	756	$1.0	$2.6	$18,086	$1,010	$1.2
2002	151,900	1,492	119	41	1,061	$1.0	$2.8	$18,320	$957	$1.3
2003	154,923	975	123	42	755	$1.1	$3.0	$18,460	$1,024	$1.4
2004	158,084	1,053	126	42	726	$1.1	$3.1	$18,530	$1,053	$1.4
2005	161,171	890	129	43	702	$1.2	$3.2	$18,619	$1,084	$1.4
2006	164,200	758	132	44	742	$1.2	$3.4	$18,800	$1,116	$1.5
2007	167,208	667	135	44	755	$1.3	$3.6	$18,983	$1,149	$1.5
2008	170,158	609	138	45	701	$1.3	$3.7	$19,083	$1,183	$1.6
2009	172,997	630	142	46	685	$1.4	$3.9	$19,221	$1,217	$1.6
2010	175,772	681	145	47	691	$1.4	$4.1	$19,328	$1,253	$1.6
2011	178,485	693	148	47	696	$1.5	$4.3	$19,419	$1,289	$1.7
2012	181,178	679	151	48	698	$1.5	$4.5	$19,575	$1,326	$1.7
2013	184,093	724	154	49	721	$1.6	$4.7	$19,742	$1,364	$1.8
2014	187,249	762	156	49	748	$1.7	$5.0	$20,016	$1,404	$1.8
2015	190,636	797	160	50	799	$1.7	$5.3	$20,367	$1,444	$1.9
2016	194,235	851	164	51	761	$1.8	$5.6	$20,661	$1,485	$1.9
2017	197,963	879	167	52	725	$1.9	$6.0	$20,923	$1,528	$1.9
2018	201,827	957	171	52	713	$2.0	$6.3	$21,245	$1,571	$2.0
2019	205,738	979	174	53	741	$2.1	$6.7	$21,668	$1,615	$2.0
2020	209,673	985	177	54	759	$2.2	$7.1	$22,084	$1,660	$2.1

• The industrial sector will continue to dominate economic activity, relative to the farm sector over the next 5 years. However, farming will remain an engine of growth. The value of farm produces is forecast to exceed $1 billion per year for the foreseeable future.

Real Industrial Production
1985 - 2020
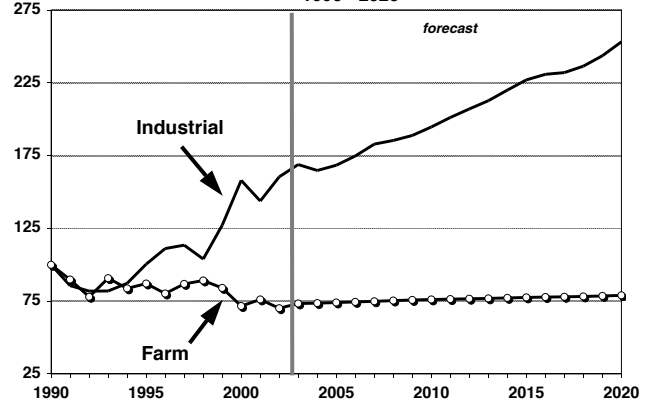average annual percent change
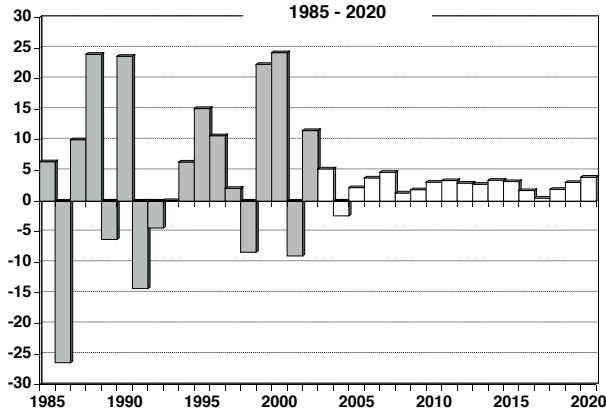
Industrial and Farm Production Indices
1990 - 2020
inflation-adjusted index (1990=100)

Total Wage & Salary (000)	Farm (000)	Mining & Construction (000)	Manufacturing (000)	Transportation, Utilities (000)	Wholesale, Retail Trade (000)	Finance, Real Estate (000)	Services (000)	Government (000)
			---employment (jobs)---					
48.5	14.5	1.7	1.8	1.9	9.2	1.2	5.1	13.3
47.9	13.8	1.6	1.7	2.1	9.0	1.1	5.2	13.5
48.8	13.9	1.5	1.8	2.1	9.2	1.1	5.4	14.0
49.7	14.3	1.4	1.7	2.0	9.4	1.1	5.5	14.4
51.0	14.4	1.4	1.8	1.9	9.8	1.2	5.8	14.8
50.4	12.3	1.8	1.9	1.9	10.3	1.1	5.7	15.5
50.3	11.3	1.6	1.9	2.0	10.4	1.3	5.7	16.1
50.4	10.0	1.7	2.7	2.0	10.2	1.3	6.0	16.5
50.6	9.3	1.8	2.7	2.0	10.4	1.3	6.2	16.8
51.5	9.4	1.6	2.8	2.0	10.4	1.3	6.4	17.5
52.5	9.5	1.6	2.9	2.1	10.5	1.3	6.6	18.2
53.6	9.4	1.6	2.9	2.1	10.6	1.3	6.7	18.9
54.7	9.4	1.7	3.0	2.1	10.7	1.3	6.9	19.7
55.6	9.3	1.7	3.0	2.1	10.8	1.4	7.1	20.4
56.4	9.2	1.6	3.0	2.1	10.9	1.4	7.2	21.1
57.1	9.0	1.6	3.1	2.1	10.9	1.4	7.3	21.6
57.8	8.9	1.6	3.1	2.1	11.0	1.4	7.4	22.2
58.5	8.7	1.6	3.1	2.1	11.1	1.4	7.5	22.8
59.2	8.6	1.7	3.2	2.1	11.2	1.5	7.7	23.4
60.1	8.4	1.7	3.2	2.1	11.3	1.5	7.9	24.0
61.1	8.2	1.8	3.2	2.2	11.4	1.5	8.1	24.7
62.1	8.0	1.8	3.3	2.2	11.6	1.5	8.3	25.5
63.0	7.8	1.8	3.3	2.2	11.7	1.5	8.5	26.2
64.0	7.6	1.7	3.4	2.2	11.9	1.5	8.7	26.9
65.0	7.5	1.8	3.4	2.2	12.1	1.5	8.9	27.7
66.1	7.2	1.8	3.4	2.3	12.2	1.5	9.1	28.5

Real Taxable Retail Sales

billions of 2002 dollars

1980 - 2020

1.5	
1.3	
1.1	
0.9	
0.7	
0.5	

1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020

Total Registered Vehicles

thousands of vehicles

1980 - 2020

180	
160	
140	
120	
100	
80	
60	

1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020

Employment in Manufacturing

thousands of jobs

1985 - 2020

2.00	
1.75	
1.50	
1.25	
1.00	
0.75	
0.50	
0.25	
0.00	

Durable Manufacturing

Non-durable Manufacturing

forecast

1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020

Employment in Services

thousands of jobs

1985 - 2020

10	
9	
8	
7	
6	
5	
4	
3	

1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020

New Residential Units

units permitted

1980 - 2020

1,200	
1,000	
800	
600	
400	
200	
0	

1980 1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020

Real Earnings per Worker
Imperial County and California

2002 dollars per worker

1985 - 2020

65,000	
60,000	
55,000	
50,000	
45,000	
40,000	
35,000	
30,000	
25,000	

California

Imperial County

forecast

1985 1990 1995 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020